By the Queene.

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THE Queenes Maieſtie, hearing credibly by report, that in ſome partes of her Realme, her people and ſubiectes are, and of late haue ben vexed and moleſted, by certayne lewde perſons, vnder pretence of executting of Commiſſions for inquiries to be made for lands concealed, who do by colour thereof, & without warrant of Commiſſion, contrary to al right, and namely contrary to her Maieſties meaning and intent, intermeddle and chalenge (as it is reported) landes of long time poſſeſſed by Churche wardens, and ſuche lyke, vpon the charitable gyftes of their predeceſſours, to the common benefite of the pariſhe, yea and certayne ſtockes of money, plate, cattayle, or ſuche lyke: and let not alſo to make pretence to the belles, leade, and other ſuche lyke thinges belongyng to pariſhe Churches, or Chappels vſed for common prayers: and further to attempt to make titles to the landes, poſſeſſions, plate, and goodes, belonging to Hoſpitales, and ſuche like houſes, vſed for maintenance of poore people, with many ſuche other vnlefull attemptes and extortions, to a pernitious example, yf the ſame ſhould be further vſed and ſuffered by colour hereof. For this purpoſe, her Maieſtie meanyng ſpeedyly to withſtande this manner of extortions, and vnlefull practices, and troubles of her ſubiectes, and doubting that the lyke is, or may be vſed in other places of the Realme, though preſently complaint be not thereof made, hath lately commaunded, that al Commiſſions, whiche are extant, and not determined, for inquiſition of any manner of concealementes, ſhould be by ſuperſedeas out of her Court of Exchequer revoked. And yet becauſe the fraudes of offendours in ſuche caſes doo ſo abounde, as it may be, that they whiche haue already begunne, by colour of commiſſions to vſe ſuche extortions and vexations for gayne, wyl them ſelues conceale the revocation of their Commiſſions, beyng but by proceſſe of ſuperſedeas: Therefore her Maieſtie (to notifie this her gratious diſpoſition more publique to her ſubiectes, and to procure due puniſhment of the offenders, with reſtitution of thinges wrongfully taken) geueth to vnderſtande by theſe preſentes, that al manner of Commiſſions nowe extant, that haue paſſed from any her Courtes, to enquire of any landes, tenementes, and hereditamentes, or of any goodes, or chatels concealed, or ſuppoſed to be concealsd before the date hereof, ſhal ceaſſe, and not continue: and that no Commiſſioner ſhal, by vertue of any ſuche Commiſſion, charge any perſon to enquire further of the contentes of any ſuche Commiſſion. And yf any manner of perſon ſhal haue iuſt cauſe to complaine of any other, for any manner of extortion, or miſuſage by colour of ſuche Commiſſion, the ſame ſhal and may exhibite their complaint to the Juſtices of aſſiſe, now this next circuite, or to any other two or three of the Juſtices of peace in the ſhyre, whom her Maieſtie chargeth to cauſe the trueth of the complaint to be examined, and the offendours to be ſeuerely and ſpeedyly puniſhed, and to make due and large reſtitution. Or yf the caſes of the extortion ſhalbe great, or that the offendours can not be founde within the Countie: then that certificat be made thereof by the ſayde Juſtices of aſſiſe, or the peace, eyther to her Maieſties priuie Counſel, or to the Lord Keper of the great Seale, to be further tried & puniſhed in the Starre chamber, for a further example. And although her Maieſtie moſt gratiouſly in this ſort meaneth to relieue her ſubiects from wronges & vexations, yet therewith her Maieſtie geueth them al to vnderſtande, that ſhe intendeth not to forbeare by ſomme better ordinary meanes, and by perſons of knowen honeſtie and wiſdome, to enquire of ſuche landes, and other thynges, as duely and iuſtly do belong to her Crowne, and are withdrawen and concealed, and to the whiche by the lawes of her Realme her Maieſtie is iuſtly intituled: wherein ſuche care ſhalbe had, as hereafter no commiſſion ſhalbe graunted, but to ſuch perſons as ſhalbe reputed of ſuch truſt & honeſtie, as ſhal by no meanes geue cauſe to offende any, but ſuche as of mere wrong wyl kepe and deteyne thynges belonging by order of lawe to the Crowne, to whiche her Maieſtie doubteth not, but al good honeſt ſubiectes do beare that duetie and reuerence, as they wyl yeelde their ſeruice to the mayntenaunce thereof, as by the lawe of God they are bounde (beſydes their earthly duetie) to her Maieſtie.

And finally, her Maieſtie woulde haue her Juſtices of aſſiſe to haue ſome ſpecial care, not only to the premiſſes in this their Seſſions, but alſo to the reformyng of certayne couetous and iniurious attemptes, of diuers that haue of late tyme by other colour then for her Maieſties vſe, taken away the Lead of Churches and Chappels, yea and the Belles alſo out of Steeples, and other common goodes belonging to Pariſhes, an example not to be ſuffered vnpuniſhed, nor vnreformed. And ſo her Maieſtie eftſones chargeth her Juſtices of aſſiſe to prouide ſeuere remedie, both for puniſhment and reformation thereof.

Geuen at her hyghneſſe pallace at Weſtminſter, the thirteenth day of Februry, in the fourteenth yere of her Maieſties raigne.

God ſaue the Queene.

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Cum priuilegio Regiæ Maieſtatis.